THE hard-working, painstaking, conscientious and often gifted young women who write the society news for the daily papers have lots that in some ways are harder than those of all other people. It is theirs to feel keenly the fact that many society women have more millions than manners. Rudeness is visited upon them at times by the very people who would have heart failure or something worse if they did not find their names in the list of those who wore mousseline de soie or something else with diamond ornaments at the charity ball. Time doesn't always bring its revenges, at least to reporters, but it did bring revenge the other day to patient Mary Powers, society reporter for the Morning Breeze.

Fifteen years ago, for one must go back a bit, there hung in an Albany (N. Y.) residence that dated back almost to Fort Orange days, the portrait of a woman beautiful beyond thought. The painting itself was not old. It was the work of Huntington, the master, and the subject was the mother of Mary Powers, now society reporter on the Chicago Daily Breeze. One night burglars entered the Powers' residence, and the next morning, when the family descended the stairs, its members found that there were missing a quantity of silverware and the life-size painting of Mrs. Powers. No trace of the silver or the portrait was ever found. It was to the police, as to the family, a mystery why burglars should carry away such peculiar and burdensome booty as the likeness of a living person, even though it were done in oil and by the master of American portrait painting.

AN OILY MANNER AND A HONEYED TONGUE.

Two weeks ago last Friday the telephone bell rang in the office of the city editor of the Chicago Daily Breeze. When the editorial ear was glued to the receiver this is what it heard:

"I am Mrs. Kenwood. I am going to give a reception early next week. Will you have the kindness to send your society reporter to my residence this afternoon? I will give her all the particulars for the Sunday edition of the Breeze."

Mary Powers two hours later pushed the electric button at the side of the front door of Mrs. Kenwood's magnificent mansion, and in a moment was shown into a little side reception room, from which she sent her card to Mrs. Kenwood. Mary Powers heard voices across the hall. Mrs. Kenwood was entertaining callers in the great room beyond. By this time the lackey had presented the reporter's card. Mrs. Kenwood's voice was more strident than that matron knew. This is what Mary Powers, society reporter, heard:

"Oh, Mrs. Hyde Park, isn't this an annoyance? How news does travel. Here's one of those horrid, annoying reporters come way down here to ask me impertinent questions about my reception. How dreadful it is that we cannot enjoy a little privacy. These people dog your very footsteps. There ought to be some law against it, but we people of position I suppose will have to put up with it. I can't think for the life of me how this woman discovered the fact that I am to give this affair."

Mary Powers listened to this with a tingling ear and a reddened cheek. She was about to leave the house, but then she had heard that such things must be, and there was some thought of loyalty to the news end of the thing, insult or no insult, and so she stayed. Mrs. Hyde Park and the other callers left, and a minute later Mrs. Kenwood was greeting Mary Powers, society reporter, with outstretched hand, an oily manner and a honeyed tongue. Mary Powers was feeling for a pencil and didn't see the hand. She took some notes for the forthcoming affair, and later turned them into copy, and then felt that her duty was done, though at the expense of a hurt heart and bruised pride.

The city editor of the Breeze received a beautifully engraved invitation to Mrs. Kenwood's reception. It was a general invitation and intended for any member of the staff that the head of things chose to select. Mary Powers was given the assignment. Naturally, she didn't want to go, but there was the question of duty and of her future career as a newspaper woman, and so she went.

The society reporter found one friend in the surging crowd, a young fellow from the east whom she had known all her life. In a corner partly shielded by some palms she was enjoying a little talk of old times while waiting an opportunity to keep her promise to speak to her hostess before leaving. The two stood there in the corner, when suddenly from beyond the palms came Mrs. Kenwood's high-pitched voice: "Yes, isn't it a beautiful portrait? It is my grandmother at the age of 20. It was painted early in the nineteenth century in Boston. She was considered the most brilliant beauty of her time. I was a little girl when she died, and she bequeathed the portrait to me. She was one of the De Quinceys, of Dorchester. I wouldn't part with it for untold wealth. You must excuse me now, though, for I must speak to that reporter girl. She begged me to see her before she went. They are so forward, but I suppose I must try to be decent."

As Mrs. Kenwood said this Mary Powers stepped from behind the palms and faced the woman. The girl was about to speak when something beyond her hostess caught her eye and held her dumb. There, smiling down at her from the wall, was the gloriously beautiful face of her mother. The portrait of Mrs. Kenwood's grandmother, De Quincey, of Dorchester, was the portrait of Mary Powers' mother, stolen 15 years before from the Albany homestead.

The guests to whom Mrs. Kenwood had been talking, struck by the girl's manner, were held to the spot.

"Mrs. Kenwood," the words came brokenly, "let the insults go. Tell me," and Mary pointed to the painting, "where did you get this portrait of my dead mother?"

The guests gasped.

"Your mother, woman, what do you mean? You are insulting."

"I mean this—the portrait you are palming off on your aristocratic friends as that of your grandmother, painted a century ago, is the portrait of my mother, now dead—a portrait that was stolen."

Then a voice broke in. It was that of the young man from the east. He was one of Mrs. Kenwood's star guests: "This picture is certainly a portrait of Miss Powers' mother. I saw it almost daily when I was a boy at their Albany home."

Then Mary Powers took the young man's arm, and together they left the house.

Mrs. Kenwood had told everybody from the lake to State street, and from Thirty-ninth street to the world's fair grounds that the radiant creature on the wall was her grandmother. Mr. Kenwood bought the portrait at an auction sale ten years ago.

Mary Powers swore out a writ of replevin. It was not necessary to serve it. The portrait was boxed up and sent to her. Mrs. Kenwood's guests who witnessed the scene in the drawing-room sped the story of the downfall of the De Quincey ancestor, of Dorchester. If anyone thinks that he has probed the depths of humiliation let him put himself for a few minutes in Mrs. Kenwood's place.

As for Mary Powers; well, there is a suspicion of sweetness in the revenge of this society reporter.—Edward B. Clark, in Chicago Record Herald.

WON BY A SCRATCH

PROF. STARRETT, of the Upper Midland university faculty, a polished gentleman of the highest intellectual attainments, a widower with one child—a daughter whose age was 20 years, and whose charms, both mental and physical, had driven more than one young man to the verge of poetry—was in a quandary. He scratched his nose delicately with the blunt end of his pencil, and permitted a frown to wrinkle the usually calm surface of his white forehead. The desk, upon which he rested one elbow, was strewn with literature pertaining to the Pan-American exposition. In his left hand, pendant at his side, was a letter just received from a friend of his boyhood, now the general passenger agent of a great railway. The letter was one practical in its cordiality. It begged the professor to accept, for old times' sake, a pass to Buffalo and return for himself and daughter.

Why the professor should have been in a quandary is difficult to understand at first blush. The weeds of vacation time were growing in the streets of the university village. His leisure was ample, and his desire to see the exposition was strong. The means were at hand. Why should he have hesitated?

The Professor Was in a Quandary.

The facts may as well be stated. His daughter was infatuated with a young student whose name was Ropp. The name was in itself sufficient to arouse an unreasonable prejudice in the breast of a highly-strung individual like the professor, even had there been nothing else against the young man, which there was. He displayed more enthusiasm for athletics than for Greek; he was given to playing first fiddle at high jinks, parties, from which statement it must be inferred that he was a violinist; he was irreverent in his demeanor toward his elders; he cracked jokes out of football season, and during the season cracked heads; in short, he was a savage. The professor was compelled to acknowledge in his more reasonable moments that there was a wonderful charm about the young fellow, and it is to be admitted guardedly that had the presumptuous rascal not fallen in love with the professor's daughter, and, what was worse, caused the professor's daughter to fall in love with him, the professor would have had not a word to say against him. The truth is that the professor's dislike was a matter of jealousy, as events conclusively proved.

The door of the study opened presently, and the young woman appeared. The professor aroused himself.

"Ah, my dear," he said, "I am glad you have come. I wish you to consider your determination regarding a trip to Buffalo. See here."

He handed her the letter from the passenger agent, watching her closely as she read it.

"It is very lovely of him to remember us," she said, returning the sheet, "but really, papa, I would rather not go. I have a horror of crowds and shows. Why cannot you go alone?"

The professor cleared his throat. He had no really good reason for not going, and he was not accomplished in the art of dissembling.

"Well—er—my dear," he began, "I can go alone, but—"

"But what, papa?"

"But I would prefer that you accompany me. We—we have been so much together, you know, and—"

He hesitated to declare outright that he did not wish to give young Ropp a clear field for his courting; he had an intuition that the declaration would sound even more ridiculous than it felt, and he had a horror of ridicule.

"And—and it would be so much more enjoyable," he continued, lamely.

The young woman said nothing until she had kissed him. There is reason to suspect that she understood.

"Will leaves for Buffalo to-day," she announced.

"What! young Ropp!" The professor brightened visibly, and it was all the young woman could do to repress a smile.

"Yes," she continued, "he is going, and he is to remain three weeks, and when he comes back, papa, he is going to ask your consent to—your consent to—to marry me. It is a secret, papa. You must not breathe it to a soul."

"No?" The professor blinked rapidly, for he was not accustomed to coming down to business with such vengeance.

"No, papa; you will not, will you?"

"No," replied the professor, decidedly, "I will not." And then, fired by the spirit of the moment, he went on, recklessly: "The truth is, my dear, that this young Ropp is not a gentleman; he is woefully lacking in consideration for others, and I can never consent—"

The door closed softly. He was alone. Sighfully he gathered together the literature pertaining to the Pan-American exposition and pulled down the rolling top of his desk, locking it. That night he was on his way to Buffalo.

It was like the professor to act thus abruptly. Foresight was not one of his strong points. He was subject to intervals of what he lightly termed lapsus mentalis, which is commonly known as absence of mind. Furthermore, he was given to jumping blindly in practical matters. And he was a sufferer from some sort of a skin malady, resembling eczema, which came out upon the small of his back and itched distractingly when he was in his bed at night. Life was not all a dream to the professor, despite his dreaminess.

He arrived at Buffalo just as the evening shadows were falling. He was dirty and exceedingly fatigued. Five hotels he visited, directed by kindly policemen, before he found a place wherein to stretch his mortal frame. At the fifth hotel they told him that if he had no objection to sleeping double, they could accommodate him, and he gladly accepted the terms, going immediately to bed.

He was exceedingly fatigued, as has been said, and naturally his sleep was sound, although not free from dreams. The professor was never entirely free from dreams, whether waking or sleeping. And throughout the night he imagined himself scratching, scratching, scratching, to allay the distracting itching caused by the skin malady upon his back. The itching was still unallayed when he opened his eyes in the morning and looked into the face of his bed-fellow.

"Well, well!" ejaculated the professor, and essayed to arise hastily.

But the movement awakened his bedfellow, who raised himself upon his elbow, smiling.

"Good morning, Prof. Starrett," he said.

"Good morning, Mr. Ropp," returned the professor, stiffly.

"I trust you rested well, sir."

It has been said that the professor was not adept in the art of dissembling. "No, sir, I did not," he said, frankly, and with some asperity; "my back troubled me a great deal, and I dare say I scratched it raw."

He drew on his trousers, and took a hand mirror from his grip, holding it before him while he backed towards the mirror upon the wall.

"Why!" he exclaimed, "there is not a scratch mark there! I must have dreamed it."

The young man offered no opinion, but suddenly he sat up in bed and pulled his nightshirt over his head, presenting his back to the professor's view.

"Oh!" gasped the professor. "Good gracious! I must have scratched your back all night!"

"Oh!" Gasped the Professor.

"You did," admitted the young man.

"But why, why," cried the professor, "did you not awaken me?"

"There were two reasons," replied the young man. "In the first place you were, to all intents and purposes, my guest, this being my bed. In the second place I did not wish to disturb your slumbers."

"You were most considerate," murmured the professor, after an interval of deliberation. Then impulsively he held out his hand.

Twenty minutes later they went down to breakfast arm in arm.

"I am Glad You Have Come."

After Waiting Four Hours.

He was a doctor and was patiently waiting for his first patient.

Thought he: "If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain. And, as patients will not seek me out, I must needs seek them out."

He strolled through the cheap market, and presently saw a man buy six nice cucumbers.

"Here's a chance!" said he, and followed him home.

Patiently he waited for four long and lonely hours, and about midnight the front door quickly opened and the man dashed down the steps.

He seized him by the arm and cried earnestly:

"Do you want a doctor?"

"No!" replied the man, roughly. "Want more cucumbers!"—London Tit-Bits.

Beware of Appearances.

Two practical jokers once, when at a railway station, observed a rustic-looking personage, who stood gaping around at everybody and everything in evident astonishment.

Thinking to have some fun, they walked up, and, stationing themselves on each side of him, proceeded to have their sport.

"Paddy," said one, "are you a fool or an ass?"

"Neither," replied the peasant, "but I'm between the two."

The jokers were observed walking away in evident disgust and looking very small.—London Tit-Bits.

The Independent American Cities.

While riding in a Maine country road a traveler observed a field of corn which was overrun with rank weeds, and midway of the piece was a large, conspicuously-displayed sign with the following: "Notice! None of Your Business If This Corn Ain't Hoed."

CLAUDE MELNOTTE'S FORTUNE

BY LEROY ARMSTRONG.

KATE RAYMOND sat rather alone that afternoon at the matinee. It was the old play of "Lady of Lyons," and she had come in just because of "Auld Lang Syne."

It was the first play she ever had seen—back there 12 years ago, when she was a girl of 18, with a passion for matinees and a tendency to idealize the heroes of drama.

She remembered the "Claude" of that earlier day, and the havoc he made matinee afternoons at the old Columbia.

Yet here was a newer theater in Randolph street, with a stock company—and the same old music that she had always remembered. She wondered what the "Claude" of today would be like. Could she ever forget what that earlier "Claude" had been?

For he had seen her sitting there in the box day after day, following the fortunes of the gay romancer. He had made it easy for her to meet him. He had courted her despite the rich father's prohibitions; and after two years of such sorrow as she had never deemed possible—such suffering as comes to few women—she had permitted him to cast her aside.

He was in the heyday of his fame then, and he did not need her. She needed him. And in the years that followed, when her father's fortune tumbled like a house of cards, and she learned labor and self-support—and self-respect, by the way—she thought of those mad, glorious days when Arnold Montreville had won her.

It was curious she should have indulged herself this afternoon, slipping into the theater without previous purpose, just for a draught of the old intoxication—a break in the monotony of a life long grown prosaic. Yet here she was, and the hush that precedes the hero's entrance was upon the house.

It was Arnold Montreville.

His name was Thomas Barry, and under that name he had married her. Yet here he strutted in all the meretricious magnificence of a new creation.

He was older. She saw that, after the first few moments of numb astonishment at what had come of her whim. He was older—and only by flashes the magnificent Lord of Como.

When her heart had ceased bounding at this unexpected glimpse of a husband long lost, at a life well behind her, she shrunk as far down in the parquet chair as she could and watched the details of his passing. He was fat now, and old. Twelve years had been like half a century to him. He struggled visibly to act the part of a jaunty bridegroom when he led the splendid "Pauline" to her home. He was plainly sick, and unequal to the demands of the part.

And her heart went out in pity to him.

She knew the theater, and she knew the world. And she wondered which of those women before her would minister to him.

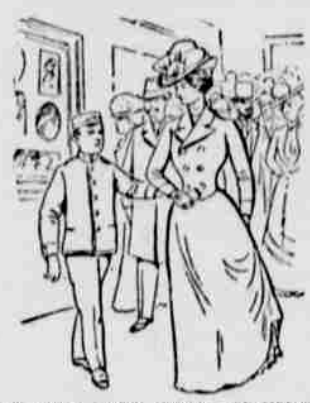
"Lady of Lyons" was a tragedy to Kate Raymond that day. And when the curtain went down she crept out, her eyes abrim with tears for sorrow it had brought her.

At the very door an usher touched her arm.

"Beg pardon—but Mr. Arnold Montreville wishes to see you. Will you wait for him here?"

He indicated the alcove reserved for women, and flitted away—for ushers were at liberty now.

"It's you—Kate—by Jove, it's you!"



AT THE VERY DOOR AN USHER TOUCHED HER ARM.

he exclaimed, as he stumbled toward her. "Come out and walk with me. I'm a brute, and I don't deserve it, but I'm tired. Be good to me."

Ah! it was the same old challenge, the same old way to her heart. She held him at arm's length for a moment. Then she surrendered. She tried to ask him—sharply—who shared his home. But she could not. The charm of the man she had loved was about her. And she was steadying his steps before they had walked a block.

"Come into Michigan avenue," he said. "It's the nearest quiet we can get afoot. By Jove, I'm glad to find you."

"You haven't troubled yourself to hunt much," she said, but was sorry before the words were uttered.

He didn't defend, nor even reply. When he spoke again it was to repeat:

"I'm sick. I'm glad I found you."

In front of the Art institute he staggered, and she half carried his awful weight to the stone steps, so he could sit down. He was half unconscious, but he roused as the cabman came to help him.

"Take me to the Lexington," he said.

It would consume a half year of her savings. She knew that. But she could not leave him.

And he roused again at the hotel. He sent for the manager and introduced his wife.

"I treated her shabbily," he said, "but she will forgive me. My wife, Mr.—"

He got no farther with the announcement, though the treasurer of the theater approached him.

And Kate Raymond, keeping to her maiden name, yet confessed the obligations of a wife and took possession of him.

He was sick and tired. He was "gone." The actors all know what that means. He had lived too fast, yielding too readily to the seductive of flattery and ease. And when the doctors came out, and Kate met them with that imperial demand a wife may make, they told her:

"He will die."

She knew it would take all the money she had scraped together in these years of teaching, in these heroic years of fight with fate. But she met it without a murmur. She would attend him to the end, and she would bury him as the husband of an honest woman should be buried.

And there was a wonderful welling up of all the old love as she bent above his pillow—the old thrill as she touched him, the old wave of emotion at his remembered caresses.

And two hours later he roused and called for the manager. He was quite calm now—and very white.

"You have my papers," he said. "My will and all the rest. This is my wife. She gets everything."

They were serious. He gasped, laid back and whispered: "She gets everything." Then he wandered, and seemed courting again the "Lady Pauline," for he told anew of the glories of Como. And in the splendor of it he was still.

They buried him, as she had planned. They took all their orders from her. But when she went to pay the manager protested.

"He left money. I will turn it over to you."

"He left money!" she exclaimed. It had never occurred to her.

"Certainly—thousands."

And he had. There were the shares of stock in good companies. There were the deeds to houses. There were the treasures in safety vaults, and the cash in the manager's hands.

Prodigal, profligate, bad—if you will—he had saved a fortune.

And little Kate Raymond, dropping at last her maiden name, came from the cemetery a rich woman.

And her heart was breaking, for the man who had won her fancy 12 years ago had won her woman's love anew. And she bowed her head in anguish that she had lost him.

PROTECTED FROM REPROOF.

Chivalrous Act of a Male Medical Student Toward a Feminine Classmate.

Years ago, when the medical profession was not made easy for women, as it is now, one woman was studying the eye, in Vienna, says an exchange. The men who were her associates were very unfriendly, both professors and students. They lost no opportunity of criticising her, and she was conscious that any mistake she might make, either in a professional or in a social way, would be laid up against her.

One morning events were all unfavorable, and she was late in class. Knowing how fatal such a lapse would be, she tore along the streets, and arrived, hot and panting, just as a delicate demonstration was about to begin. The students were standing in a semicircle about the professor, and she slipped in among them, hoping not to be noticed. But a misstep brought her plunging forward, and her watch leaped from her belt and fell, with a clatter, at the professor's feet. He glared; but now came an act of chivalry.

Another man, who had always shown the greatest enmity to women students, stepped forward, coolly picked up the watch as if it were his own, put it in his pocket, and thus drew upon himself the fire of disapproval. After the lecture was over he restored it to its owner with a gentle courtesy quite removed from his professional rudeness.

Too Previous.

"May I," the young man began, with a quaver in his voice, "may I presume so far upon our short acquaintance as to ask you—"

"Please say no more," faltered the maiden. "I regret deeply to give you pain; but if I have inadvertently encouraged you to entertain hopes that can never be realized, I cannot forgive myself. Believe me, I am sincerely—"

"Pardon me," interrupted the youth, who had gasped once or twice and drawn his hand across his brow while she was speaking; "but I was only going to ask you for the loan of twopence for my omnibus fare. I was stupid enough to come away from home this evening without my purse. Ah! thank you; I will return it without fail. Good night."—London Tit-Bits.